

## Creating Christian Indians: Native Clergy in the Presbyterian Church

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*Creating Christian Indians: Native Clergy in the Presbyterian Church*, by Bonnie Sue Lewis. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003. xix, 281 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$34.95 cloth.

Reviewer Stephen Warren is visiting assistant professor of history at Augustana College, Rock Island, Illinois. He is the author of *The Shawnees and Their Neighbors, 1795–1870* (2005).

*Creating Christian Indians* is a study of Native ministers, primarily Dakota and Nez Perce, between 1865 and 1935. Presbyterian missionaries, including many women, worked among the Dakota and Nez Perce tribes during this 70-year span. By 1930, 16 Nez Perce and 39 Dakota Sioux tribal members had become ordained Presbyterian ministers.

Historian Bonnie Sue Lewis tells their story within the context of a church that barred women from the pulpit. Paradoxically, Native American men who became ministers often began their journey into Christianity through the efforts of female missionaries. Lewis explores the well-known gender discrimination within Protestant churches while at the same time challenging the widely accepted view that those same churches discriminated against Native Americans. Lewis's story is at once refreshingly strange and familiar.

Presbyterian missionaries made Christianity accessible by translating it into a variety of indigenous languages. The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) also combined preaching and agricultural assistance from 1810 through the 1930s. Lewis convincingly argues that throughout these agricultural and educational efforts, Christianity was not simply the cynical choice of Native leaders engaged in power struggles within their tribes. Nor was the growth of Christianity a straightforward colonial imposition. According to Lewis, Native people wanted to become Christians because of perceived parallels between their own traditional beliefs and Christianity. The acceptance of Presbyterian churches among the Makah, Spokane, Nez Perce, and Dakota seems to validate her argument.

Yet Lewis's book makes it difficult to assess connections between traditional beliefs and Christianity, and parallel contests for authority between those for and against Presbyterianism. What Lewis means by "pre-Christian" or "traditional" values remains unclear. Cultural histories of the Dakota and Nez Perce tribes before 1865 would have allowed readers to gauge the impact of missionaries. The absence of such information makes it hard to grasp the extent to which Native Christians reworked the cultural and political order of their communities.

The ABCFM held Native ministers to rigorous ordination standards. Once accepted, they had a widespread impact on the national

church. They challenged racist assumptions of Indian aptitudes in the aftermath of military defeat and the onset of allotment. On their respective reservations, Native ministers became involved in struggles over leadership, residence, and cultural practices. For Lewis, these realities were the sad by-product of a deeper spiritual transformation. According to her, Christianity alone cannot be blamed for these sad consequences.

Lewis's insightful history reveals much about race and gender after the Civil War. This is not a simple story of steadily improving gender and race relations over time. For example, Lewis shows that the number of Native ministers has steadily declined since 1935. Her detailed and sympathetic analysis of Native ministers will surprise many students of Indian-white relations. *Creating Christian Indians* will reopen the debate over Christianity and its role in Indian country.

*The Price of Progress: Public Services, Taxation, and the American Corporate State, 1877 to 1929*, by R. Rudy Higgens-Evenson. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003. Reconfiguring American Political History Series. 256 pp. Charts, notes, index. \$39.95 cloth.

Reviewer Judith Sealander is professor of history at Bowling Green State University. She is the author of *Private Wealth and Public Life: Foundation Philanthropy and the Reshaping of American Social Policy from the Progressive Era to the New Deal* (1997).

The subtitle of Rudy Higgens-Evenson's *The Price of Progress* answers the title's implied question. The price of progress was not just increased taxation, but also the emergence of the corporate state itself. Moreover, Higgens-Evenson joins a growing number of scholars who argue that early twentieth-century "progress" came most clearly at the state and local level. If "progress" meant governmental willingness to assume new duties, it demanded revenue. Highways, sewer systems, hospitals for the mentally ill, and greatly enlarged public mandatory school systems not only redefined state obligations, but they also demanded new ways to borrow and tax.

Rising tax rates provided a strong incentive for businessmen to take a hard look at these new kinds of governments. In the process, corporate leaders changed tactics. Once content with "bribing and blackmailing" politicians (9), they now demanded that government use business models, which meant standardizing tasks, centralizing purchasing, and concentrating budgetary authority. By 1929, the state had become corporate. Or at least *some* states had enthusiastically embraced business models. Others remained "Jeffersonian republics"

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